

MINUTES

Windham Ridge Parent Advisory Council

February 3rd, 2015 | 6:30-8:30pm

Attendance

Liz Novatsidis
Starr Mills
Véronique O'Malley
Doug Chester
Kelly Giesen
Mukesh Gautam
Esther Boivin
Julie Romanovich
Houda Alassad
Kristina Barybina
Vivian Aitas
Preeti Kumar
Amir Mirshahi (Absent)
Rita Russo (Guest)
Myrna Pavlin (Guest)
Kim Short (Guest)
Nicole Calvert (Guest)
Adrienne Ambrozic (Guest parent)
Joanne Conte Casola (Guest parent)

Welcome

Agenda approved by council, all in favour.

Rita Russo, Superintendent, was welcomed to the meeting. Rita came to observe the meeting and take any comments back to the Board.

Carnival:

The carnival is set for Friday February 13th, 2015. Event is organized by Nancy Séguin and Julie is working on coordinating the volunteers for the event.

Julie to finalize schedule and send out.

Starr read out the new policy that the Trustee provided us with just last week. Rita said that she received some concerns regarding new policy from parents. She clarified that it is an operational procedure and not a policy. She identified the steps in the new procedure. Lice are not allowed in school but nits (eggs) are. After the lice are found, the child is to be sent home and treatment for lice removal will be encouraged. After that the child can return to school even if he or she has nits. The reason for the new procedure according to YRDSB (Rita Russo) is that kids are missing too much school while receiving lice treatment at home. The new procedure is effective immediately. Rita advised that lice is not a communicable disease; instead more of a nuisance. She asked Council to suggest proposed wording for the procedure if they were not in agreement with what it currently says.

Concerns brought forward by council were as follows:

1. Five policies from neighboring regions were reviewed all were found to have a “No Lice, No Nit” policy contrary to YRDSB policy of allowing nits in school
2. While the Canadian Pediatric Society sites “Medical” reasoning regarding lice, it does not address the *“negative social impact” of this condition.*
3. Students inflicted with head lice that attend school are more likely to be segregated from their peers, met with a hostile environment and potentially bullied. If this policy is enforced we will simply be replacing one issue for a much larger one
4. Another concern is the *allergic response* to head lice saliva, which can cause severe itching leading to possible skin infection. The school board has been very diligent in respecting the needs of individuals with many types of allergies and head lice should be treated no differently
5. The *financial implications (on families)* of this decision should also be considered. While many parents are diligent in checking their own children and socially responsible in minimizing the effects of spreading lice by removing their children from contacting others, this policy will force many more families to absorb an unforeseen financial burden. A family can spend in the region of \$300-\$400 to treat an initial outbreak in the home
6. Suggestion made that YRDSB revert back to the old policy
7. We should have a nit free environment as a school cannot control when the nit become live lice. When “Nits” hatch at school it violates the YRDSB policy.
8. Concerns were raised that more children could contract lice, with this policy in effect, causing more absences from schools
9. Parents are concerned with repeated exposure to chemicals should they children continue to contract lice at a school which allows live nits in the classroom

We are scheduled to do *lice checks in March and the cost will be \$855.00.* Starr and Liz asked how we should communicate the new policy with the parents for their review and feedback as it is not easily accessible online and not sent to 200+ school chairs in region as a “policy for comment”. There was also suggestion asking if this working procedure could be implemented as an operational piece individual to each school like our homework policy.

Rita will take our suggestions back to the policy board.

Veronique suggested putting a link to all policies “for comment” (including procedures (under the School Council section) in the Friday weekly announcements to the parents.

Principal Profile:

Deferred to April 2015. Council is required to review every two years. Our last review was done in June 2014 so we have ample time.

Principal Report:

End of year event. Last year our 10th anniversary celebration was a huge success and it would be nice to turn it into an annual event. The purpose of the event is to do something fun and different for the kids that they may not have an opportunity to do otherwise. June 11th has been selected as the date for this event. Options for trips were shared and funding of the activities was discussed. Teachers have been surveyed on this and are supportive of a year-end celebration.

Council voted all in favour to proceed with such an event.

Council had \$4000 initially intended for this event. It was decided that even though the events may not cost the same, the funds should be divided evenly amongst all children. It was also agreed that should the event require more funding, council should increase the budget as much as our council funds can allow.

Mukesh to review budget to see how much council can provide.

School Climate Report 2nd pass – School Plan Integration

Deferred to April 2015 due to time constraints.

Treasurer Report

Mukesh went over the numbers. Vivian advised that 90% of the pizza money from the second term is in. 363 slices have been ordered so far.

Teacher's Report

Esther: Science teacher has requested \$370 (Let's talk Science \$260 bus, science supplies \$110) for Grade 7.

Council reviewed that only half of the funds allocated for buses (\$630 out of \$1260 total) and supply teachers (\$1500 out of \$3000 total) were released earlier in the year; it was agreed that the rest of the money should be released now.

Council agreed that with these remaining funds, we will allocate 1 bus for track & field, 1 bus for science, and 1 bus for music event.

Suggestions for next year Carnival – add electives, maybe four Fridays in the winter so kids can try activities like skiing, tubing etc. Council thought it was a great idea.

Committee Updates

Education – Technology Workshop:

Amir – absent. Passed on comments through Liz. Upcoming Pro Grant topic: How Gender differences influence learning & behavior. May, 14, 2015 is confirmed for this workshop. Speaker Michael Reist already contacted and ready.

Fundraising – QSP / Direct Donations:

Vivian – Final numbers for pizza to be complete next week. QSP is officially done. Kelly suggests, as a precaution, not to release hold on final \$551.96 in case we receive an invoice close to the end of the year. Council agrees.

Vivian to contact QSP rep to determine if this hold can be released.

Volunteers & Yearbook & Mural:

Julie – Mural is underway. Volunteers for carnival day secured. Volunteers for student clubs becoming sparse and for those that opt to help out, it is always the same few.

Yearbook set to go on sale online by February 6 and paper order forms sent home some time during week of February 9. Sales on until February 27. Jostens needs number of copies sold by March 1.

Student Programs:

Houda – Grade 4 students start origami lunch program next week. They are having difficulty securing volunteer for the activity as a lot of volunteers are already signed up for the Robotics Lego club.

Veronique suggested contacting the volunteers to see if they can do another day and then changing the date the club meets.

Communications/Council Website Updates:

Preeti – no update

School Grants:

Kristina:

Working on the Friendship Garden idea as part of the grant from the Toyota Evergreen Foundation. Veronique to speak to Mr. Cipollone. Kristina to look into subsidized tree planting. www.yourleaf.org was suggested as one of the places to get trees and shrubs as a low cost.

Next Meeting

Tuesday, April 7th, 2015